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Security Council

Seventy-first year

Provisional

7615th meeting
Friday, 29 January 2016, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Bermúdez	(Uruguay)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Lucas
	China	Mr. Xu Zhongsheng
	Egypt	Mr. Aboulatta
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Japan	Mr. Yoshikawa
	Malaysia	Mr. Ibrahim
	New Zealand	Mr. Van Bohemen
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Senegal	Mr. Ciss
	Spain	Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi
	Ukraine	Mr. Yelchenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Rycroft
	United States of America	Mr. Pressman
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Ramírez Carreño

Agenda

Security Council mission

Briefing by Security Council mission to Africa (21-23 January 2016)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Security Council mission

Briefing by Security Council mission to Africa (21-23 January 2016)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

At today's meeting, the Security Council will be briefed by the representatives of Egypt and France, two of the co-leaders of the Security Council mission to Africa that took place from 21 to 23 January.

I now give the floor to the representative of France, who will brief us on the Security Council's visit to Burundi.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): On 21 and 22 January, the Security Council visited Burundi for the second time in less than a year, following the trip we organized under the French presidency of the Council in March 2015. As one of the organizers of the mission, along with the United States and Angola, I have the honour, as is customary, to give the Council an informational briefing on our visit to Burundi. The representative of Egypt, who oversaw the African Union segment of the Council's visit, on 23 January, will brief us on the visit to Addis Ababa. I will then make a few remarks in my national capacity.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Secretariat for the significant efforts it made to organize this visit, enabling us to do it under good conditions and make it as productive as possible. I would also like to thank the Burundian officials and others whom we met with there for making themselves available to us.

The visit falls into the category of follow-up on the situation in Burundi, which continues to be a matter of considerable concern to the Council. To start with, I should note that the Security Council adopted resolution 2248 (2015) on 12 November and a presidential statement (S/PRST/2015/18) on 28 October and made a press statement on 19 December 2015; those served as terms of reference and a guide for the messages the Security Council wanted to convey to its interlocutors during the visit. Essentially, the Council emphasized the vital importance of refraining from any form of violence, strengthening the political dialogue that began on 28 December 2015, protecting the people by ensuring better respect for human rights and improving relations with the international community, whether as represented by the East African Community, the African Union or the United Nations.

The Council first met with a group that included two elder statesmen, former Chairs of the United Nations Expert Panel on the Regional Peace Initiative in Burundi, and we were able to fully come to grips on the importance of full compliance with both the letter and the spirit of the terms of the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for finding a solution to the current situation in Burundi. The Security Council delegation then met with the Burundi representative of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, who gave us a thorough account of the situation in Burundi and went over the negative developments of the past few months.

We sat down with representatives of civil society, whose accounts testified to their defiance of the Burundian authorities, particularly the security forces, and to the clear and urgent need for protection by the international community. The Council also met with various independent media representatives, who described the very difficult conditions under which they are still attempting to conduct their professional activities; with various representatives of the political opposition, including in the National Assembly and the Government, from whom we heard quite pointed criticism; and with members of the so-called radical opposition, not represented in the official institutions, who painted a very gloomy picture of the political and security situation. In their view, genocide was either already happening in Burundi or was about to.

We also had the opportunity to talk to three of the principal members of the Burundian authorities, who, unlike those whom I have just cited, who described serious political and security problems, gave us a very upbeat and optimistic picture of the current situation. We held a meeting with Burundi's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Alain Nyamitwe, to discuss the political and security aspects of the current situation and Burundi's relations with various elements of the international community — the East African Community, the African Union and the United Nations. Burundi's First Vice-President, Gaston Sindimwo, received us in his home for an exchange of views on the security and

political situation and relations between Burundi and the international community.

Finally, Mr. Pierre Nkurunziza, President of the Republic, hosted a discussion with the Security Council at his residence in Gitega. After he had heard what the Council had to say, he went over recent developments in Burundi with a positive and hopeful spin on the current situation in the country. He said that as far as he was concerned, the reports we have been seeing in the international media were wrong. He welcomed the fact that the dialogue in Kampala had been resumed on 28 December, considering that in his view only the Head of State of Uganda was in a position to support the inter-Burundian process under way. President Nkurunziza again reiterated his firm opposition to any interference from outside, in particular from the African Union. He thanked the Council for its attention to Burundi over the years and said that he was fully prepared to continue to maintain good relations with the United Nations.

The Council then travelled to Ethiopia to meet with the African Union, and I will hand that part over to my Egyptian colleague, with the understanding that it is clear that the Council has lessons to draw from our trip to Burundi in the light of the decisions that the regional actors will be making very soon. Before my colleague takes the floor, I would like to make a few brief comments in my national capacity.

As the Council knows, France has been following the situation in Burundi closely and with great concern. Since the crisis began we have been calling on all the parties involved to halt the violence and begin a dialogue aimed at reaching a consensus solution that respects the Arusha Agreement, which now more than ever constitutes the compass both for us and for all the stakeholders in Burundi. France immediately suspended its defence and security cooperation with Burundi, and the African Union, the East African Community and the Ugandan mediators have also been working on the issue. France has given its full support to encouraging efforts to open an inclusive dialogue with the African mediation and has advocated for the adoption of European sanctions against three of the people close to power and one member of the armed opposition, in order to increase the pressure on the parties involved. Consultations between the European Union and the Burundian authorities began at the beginning of December. In Geneva, the European Union got the Human Rights Council to request that the High Commissioner for Human Rights assess the situation. The statements made by various sectors of the population have given rise to fears that the situation is worsening, and France and its partners have given the authorities and the radical opposition clear warnings.

On France's initiative, as I said, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2248 (2015), condemning the violence and urging all the parties to open a dialogue, on pain of sanctions. The resolution also calls for strengthening the United Nations presence in Burundi. France will continue to support the African initiatives in Addis Ababa, Geneva and Brussels. Lastly, we were concerned to learn of the arrest in Burundi of a French journalist, Jean-Philippe Rémy, and a British photographer, Philip Moore. We call on the Burundian authorities to release them immediately, with the understanding that diplomatic efforts are under way to that end.

As I said, the fact that we have had to visit Burundi for the second time in less than a year is testament to the Council's concern and involvement and is a necessary stage in that involvement. We should bear in mind that we will put together all the lessons there are to be learned from the visit and, in the light of the outcome of the African Union Summit, we should shoulder our responsibility to break the cycle of violence, encourage the launch of a genuinely inclusive inter-Burundian dialogue and ensure full respect for human rights in Burundi.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of France for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the representative of Egypt, who will inform us about the Security Council's visit to the headquarters of the African Union in Addis Ababa.

Mr. Aboulatta (Egypt): At the outset, I would like to express my appreciation for the confidence vested in Egypt by the members of the Council in asking us to take part in the preparations for this important mission.

As members are aware, the Council decided to take the opportunity of its stopover in Addis Ababa on 23 January to hold an informal dialogue with the Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU). The purpose of the dialogue was for the two Councils to exchange views on a number of issues of common interest, namely, the situations in Burundi and in Somalia. Although our time in Addis Ababa was brief, we were able to engage in a substantive and useful dialogue with our African partners. In that regard,

I would like to thank the Secretariat, as well as the United Nations Office to the African Union, for their valuable support in the preparations for that stopover. I also wish to thank the AU Commission, the Office of the Permanent Observer for the African Union to the United Nations in New York for their contributions and the Ethiopian Government for its hospitality.

The activities of Council members commenced in Addis Ababa with a briefing from the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to the African Union and Head of the United Nations Office to the African Union, Mr. Haile Menkerios. During that meeting, Council members shared the key messages they delivered during their visit to Burundi, as well as their views on the meetings they held with the various interlocutors. Special Representative Menkerios expressed his views on the situation and provided valuable insights into the AU position, the dynamics within the Peace and Security Council and the broader regional context.

The meeting with the Special Representative also provided an opportunity for the Security Council to reflect on the situation in Somalia, particularly the political process and the upcoming elections, the security challenges facing the country and the continuing terrorist threat posed by Al-Shabaab. The discussion also addressed issues pertaining to the cooperation between the AU and the United Nations in support of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). The informal dialogue between the Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council was lively and interactive, with most members of the two Councils constructively engaged. The participation by the Head of the United Nations Office and the AU Commissioner for Peace and Security also provided important insights.

In that connection, before I move on to the highlights of the discussions, I would like to extend my thanks to Uruguay for co-presiding over the dialogue, and to France and the United Kingdom for initiating the discussions on the situations in Burundi and Somalia, respectively. I also want to point out that the holding of that informal dialogue was an important step. All participants welcomed its significance in strengthening cooperation on issues of mutual interest.

With regard to Burundi, many participants stressed the urgency of addressing the situation and pre-empting any possibilities of further deterioration, and called for concerted efforts from all regional and international partners to that end. Members of both Councils also agreed on the priority that must be given to the restoration of security and the initiation of a genuine and inclusive national dialogue, which could lead to a consensual political solution to the current situation. In that connection, members of both Councils expressed support for the regional mediation efforts led by Uganda on behalf of the East African Community. At the same time, Council members expressed concern at the slow progress of the mediation. They were interested in hearing the views of the Peace and Security Council on the nature of the United Nations engagement in support of the regional mediation efforts, through the role of the Special Envoy of the Secretary General and the United Nations support team deployed to Burundi.

Discussions also focused on the need for supporting the restoration of security and the provision of adequate protection for civilians in Burundi. The envisaged deployment of 100 AU human rights and military observers was of great interest. The deployment of those observers would provide better monitoring of the situation and represent a constructive point of entry in engaging the Government of Burundi.

In addition, several members of the Peace and Security Council called for the adoption of a Chapter VII draft resolution by the Security Council authorizing the deployment of an African prevention and protection mission in Burundi. In contrast, several members expressed strong views that the deployment of such a mission without the consent of the Government of Burundi would be counterproductive and ineffective. Council members walked out of the informal dialogue with a sense of confidence that the Peace and Security Council was determined to make every effort to address the situation in Burundi. The upcoming AU Summit in Addis Ababa on 29 January will represent a crucial venue for generating a regional political strategy that the Security Council would be able to support.

On Somalia, the two Councils heard presentations by the representatives of the United Kingdom and Ethiopia. Through those presentations, the two Councils noted that 2016 promises to be a defining year for the country, and that a need exists for continued engagement with stakeholders in Somalia with the aim of organizing transparent and credible elections. The two presentations welcomed the progress under way in the implementation of Somalia's Vision 2016 and reached the same conclusion, namely, that the Somali stakeholders should be encouraged to reach an

agreement on an election model for elections to be held this year and without further delay.

The two speakers raised concerns about the continued threat posed by the Al-Shabaab terrorist group to peace and security in the region. They also commended the role of AMISOM, while expressing hope that the newly established United Nations Support Office in Somalia would facilitate continued and more effective United Nations support to AMISOM. In addition, the representative of Ethiopia voiced the AU's concern about the financial challenges facing the Mission. He stated that AMISOM was operating in the most difficult and dangerous of environments, implementing a Security Council mandate, the organ with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the Security Council, I should like to express my appreciation to all the members of the Council and to the Secretariat who participated in the mission for the manner in which they discharged their important responsibilities. In particular, I would like to highlight the logistical and organizational arrangements that facilitated that mission.

The meeting rose at 10.30 a.m.